



374477

Chemical Recovery Systems Inc.  
Superfund Site  
Lorain County, Elyria, Ohio



*U. S. EPA, Ohio EPA, & ATSDR* 1



## **Site Background**

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## **Site Description**

Chemical Recovery Systems (CRS) is located at 142 Locust Street (formerly Maple Street) in a predominately commercial or industrial area near the central business district of Lorain County, Elyria, Ohio.

CRS, is approximately four acres (with several lots within the four acres).

The East Branch of the Black River ("River"), forms a peninsula around the CRS site and the is bordered:

- to the north by Englehard Chemical Company (formerly Harshaw Chemical Company);
- to the east by Locust Street and Englehard Chemical Company; and
- to the south by M&M Aluminum Siding.

The site is currently leased by M&M Siding who uses the site to store aluminum siding.

Presently, most of the site is empty, two buildings are currently located in the southeast corner of the Site:

- The masonry shell of a building that housed the Rodney Hunt Still; and
- A former office/warehouse building.

The foundation of a building that housed the Brighton Still building is located in the northwest corner of the Site.

The site is fenced on all sides except the side bounded by the River which is covered by a dense vegetation. The surface drainage is west towards the River.

A storm sewer line underlies the north end of the site and empties into the river at the northwest corner of the property.

The Site is underlain from four to 18 feet of fill.  
The fill is composed of:

1. Sandy clay mixed with bricks and cinders;
2. Layers of unconsolidated sandy clay, sand, and silty sand occur beneath the fill, averaging four feet in thickness; and
3. These glacial sediments are, in turn underlain by sandstone bedrock that occurs from four to 20 feet below the ground surface beneath the Site.

On-site groundwater has been detected 10 feet below ground surface (bgs) and flows to the west discharging into the River.

- Groundwater may also seep into the storm sewer at the north end of the site and be discharged into the River through its outfall;
- There are no municipal well fields within a four mile radius of the site and no surface water intakes along the River within 15 miles downstream of the Site.

### **Site History**

In 1960, Russell Obitts began the operations by leasing the lots from the Swiers Coal Company. A few years later Mr. Obitts's wife, Dorothy, purchased the parcels from the Coal Company.

From 1960 through 1974, Obitts Chemical Company operated as a solvent reclamation facility. Receiving used organic solvents from various industries, distilling away the impurities and selling the "cleaned" solvents back to the industries or sold to new industries.

The solvents were transported to and from the Site in 55-gallon drums or by tanker trucks.

In 1974, Chemical Recovery Systems (CRS), Inc. assumed operations of the Site through a stock purchase agreement, CRS leased the lots from Mrs. Obitts, with an option to purchase.

Later, CRS exercised its purchase option. Still later, CRS defaulted on payment for the property, and Mrs. Obitts assumed uncontested ownership following a legal action.



From 1974 to 1981 CRS continued its operation of solvent reclamation. The solvents continued to be collected and stored in 55-gallon drums and tanker trucks waiting to be cleaned on site.

The number of 55-gallon drums used for "dirty" solvent storage were between 4,000-9,000.

The number of above ground storage tanks on site (AST) ranged from six to nine.

Operational problems included improper construction of the AST deteriorating and leaking conditions of many of the drums.

During August 1978 and April 1980, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), Northeastern District Office documented releases of chemicals from the site into the River.

Concerns about the releases into the River, and the potentially dangerous conditions on-site frequently documented by the local fire Marshall, initiated U. S. EPA to bring suit against CRS in 1980, requiring owners to abate problems identified at the site.

On October 7, 1980, U.S. EPA filed a complaint

alleging violations of the Section 7003 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and Section 301 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The first complaint involved the threat of fire and explosion posed by the presence of the drums containing flammable waste on the site and the presence of defective distillation units.

The second complaint reported a leachate stream noted running down the bank into the River. A boom in the river isolated some of the contaminants. Analysis of the a sample collected from the isolated area detected polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and organic chemicals.

Some time prior to August 1981, CRS had:

- Removed all tanks, drums, and other solvent containers from the site;
- Ceased the receipt, processing and the storage of the solvents on Site;
- Removed/demolished four buildings on Site, and
- Removed both distillation units from the Site.

By the time the 1983 Consent Decree was enforced, CRS had:

- Secured the Site with a fence;
- Filled in the sumps located under both Still buildings with concrete;
- Leveled the dikes on the Site;
- Excavated contaminated soil from around the Brighton Still building, replaced the excavated soil with clean fill; and
- Disposed of the excavated soil in an approved hazardous waste disposal site.

On November 7, 1983 during a Site inspection by U.S. EPA it was concluded that CRS was in compliance with the clean up action stipulated in the 1983 Consent Decree.

## **Previous Investigations & References**

July 1999, ATSDR. Public Health Consultation Chemical Recovery Systems, Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio.

September 29, 1997. Ohio EPA. Site Team Evaluation and Prioritization (STEP) Report for Chemical Recovery Systems, Elyria, Lorain, County.

August 8, 1995, U.S. EPA. Focused Site Inspection Prioritization Site Evaluation Report for Chemical Recovery Systems, Inc., Elyria, Ohio, (PRC Environmental).

April 1982, U.S. EPA. A Hydrogeological and Extent of Contamination Study, Field Investigation Team (FIT), (E&E Environmental).



